

**CONTACT: Don Rhodes, 213/236-1840
Jeff Lustgarten 323/466-3445**



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 4, 2004**

**SCAG RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD FOR
OUTSTANDING FINANCIAL AND AUDITING PRACTICES**

LOS ANGELES - The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) has received a national award recognizing its outstanding accounting and finance practices. SCAG received the award from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), North America's largest professional association of state and provincial finance officers, for excellence in accounting and financial reporting. SCAG also announced that the world-renowned consulting firm KPMG recently completed a 2003/2004 financial audit of SCAG and issued an unqualified opinion with no comments or findings.

Sid Tyler, Pasadena City Councilman and chair of SCAG's Audit and Best Practices Subcommittee, stated, "We are particularly proud of this award in that it demonstrates the tremendous strides SCAG has taken to modernize its accounting and financial practices and prepare our agency to handle complicated planning issues in a more efficient, effective manner."

The GFOA Award for Excellence in Government Finance, the highest form of recognition in government accounting and financial reporting, was presented to SCAG for its financial management during FY2002/2003. The award recognizes contributions to the practice of government finance that exemplify outstanding financial management. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting. Its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management. SCAG received high marks in eight criteria to achieve this award: local significance and value, technical significance, transferability, documentation, cost/benefit, efficiency, originality and documentation.

(more)

In addition to the clean audit received by KPMG, SCAG achieved several major financial milestones in 2003 and 2004, including a 50% reduction of both interest costs and fees related to its line of credit, along with fully repaying the credit line on June 30 of this year. It was also announced that SCAG's accounts receivable and accounts payable had been cut in half.

As the nation's largest metropolitan planning organization (MPO) – representing the six-county, 187-city Southern California region – SCAG has undertaken a comprehensive “Best Practices” initiative involving a series of enhancements to SCAG's accounting, contracting and financial operations.

Throughout the past four decades, SCAG has evolved into the nation's largest regional planning organization, functioning as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for six counties: Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside and Ventura. The Southern California region encompasses a population exceeding 16 million persons in an area of more than 38,000 square miles. SCAG develops short and long-term regional plans and strategies that provide for efficient movement of people, goods and information; enhance economic growth and international trade; and improve the environment and quality of life in Southern California.

For more information about the work of the Southern California Association of Governments, please visit the SCAG website at www.scag.ca.gov.